Consumerism in the Digital Age A Communication Study on the Influence of Social Media Advertising on Consumer Behavior

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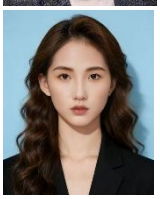
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Abstract

With the rapid development of Internet technology and mobile devices, social media advertising has occupied an important position in the digital advertising market. Based on the SOR model, this paper explores the impact of social media advertisements on consumer behavior, especially how the authenticity, interestingness, and usefulness of user-generated content affect consumers' perceived value and purchase intention, and further proposes five hypotheses. Through the collection and analysis of 400 questionnaires, the results show that each feature of social media advertising significantly influences consumer behavior. Specifically, the authenticity of user-generated content positively affects both consumer-perceived value and expected regret, and fun and usefulness similarly contribute to consumer-perceived value. Only Cronbach's alpha coefficient for authenticity is low at 0.441, while Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all other aspects are high and greater than 0.7, which indicates that the survey results obtained from the measurement questions of the scale of content features of social media advertisements have a high level of reliability. The metric value of the KMO is 0.841, which is greater than 0.8, which suggests that the scale data on content features

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of social media advertising is very suitable for factor analysis. It is also known that the approximate chi-square value of Bartlett's test of sphericity is 10218.166 with 325 degrees of freedom and SIG value of 0.000 which is less than 0.01, which passes the test of significance at the significant level of 1%.

Keywords

Social Media, Advertising, Consumers, Communication, Authenticity.

1. Introduction

The increasing development of Internet technology social media and mobile devices represented by Facebook and WeChat is popular for people to engage in external social activities (**Sreejesh *et al.***, 2020). Various content products dependent on such social media and the quality of their output have gradually become the key elements affecting consumer platform stickiness (**Niu *et al.***, 2021). Relying on social media platforms and lurking in an information environment over-saturated with density, social media advertising has emerged.

There is a huge space for the volume of social media advertising in China, with a share of 12.5% in China's digital advertising market. According to the e-Marketer report, in China, the revenue brought by advertising on social media platforms has expanded from 8.3 billion yuan in 2016 to 250.1 billion yuan in 2022, with an annual growth rate of 102.2% (**Chu *et al.***, 2020; **Winter *et al.***, 2021). In this context, academics have turned to research related to social media advertising, and many studies have been carried out around the meaning, characteristics, and role mechanisms of social media propaganda. It is reported that: the common way to enhance the effect of advertising in social media advertising is to use human language and images, such as narrative personification (**Hayes *et al.***, 2021; **Kyu Kim *et al.***, 2020; **Sari *et al.***, 2020). Because social media provides a place for interpersonal communication, consumers expect brands to engage in interpersonal communication, respect users' thoughts and feelings, and listen to their opinions and needs, rather than just posting promotional messages through advertisements (**Lina; Setiyanto**, 2021). To cater to consumers more fully, advertisers have sought to change the way they interact with users by playing the role of their friends and changing the way they communicate with them, including the use of interpersonal communication language and the delivery of impression perceptions (including brand image perceptions and company image perceptions) (**Arora; Agarwal**, 2020; **Scholz**, 2021; **Weismueller *et al.***, 2020). For example, the use of constructed dialog to convey information, rather than a single statement of information, can increase the hedonic value of consumer engagement with social media and increase purchase intent (**Kizgin *et al.***, 2020). Creating consumer brand impression perceptions, rather than just presenting product information, enhances consumer interactive engagement (**Lee *et al.***, 2022). These strategies help advertisements to reduce the sense of commercial intrusion and create a harmonious interactive environment between advertisements and users (**Luo *et al.***, 2020), by increasing the level of user engagement characteristics of social media advertisements to increase consumer preferences for advertisements and brands (**Aydin *et al.***, 2021). Where exactly social media advertisements influence consumer behavior and how to effectively use these influences to increase consumer desires have not been given enough attention and response by related studies.

Fast updating of Internet technology, social media advertising occupies an important position in the field of digital advertising. According to the framework of the SOR model, this research deeply analyzes the rules of social media advertisements on consumers' behavioral patterns, focuses on how user-generated content shapes consumers' perceived value and purchasing tendency on the dimensions of authenticity, interestingness, and utility, and carefully constructs five hypotheses on this basis. Through the systematic collection and careful analysis of 400 valid questionnaires, the results show that several characteristics of social media advertisements have a magnificent influence on consumer behavior. Specifically, the authenticity of user-generated content not only positively enhances consumers' perceived value, but also reduces their expected regret; meanwhile, the fun and practicality of the content also play a positive part in enhancing consumers' perceived value.

2. Social Media Ad-Consumer Relationship Analysis Based on Sor Modeling

2.1. SOR Model

The stimulus-organism-response model (S-O-R model) is a vital idea in environmental psychology, developed from the S-R (stimulus-response) model, in which the S-R mannequin is a black-box mannequin that lacks a rationalization of the interior mechanism of the stimulus-to-response. Scholars Mehrabian and Russell were the first to recommend the S-O-R mannequin in 1974, dealing with the essential position of the organism, the entity environmental stimuli (positive and negative) beneath the stimulation of the organism (cognitive, affective, etc.), and then brought on the person to make a conduct that produces pro- or avoidance (**Kong *et al.***, 2021).

Bitner developed an environment-consumer behavior model primarily adopting the S-O-R model, in which exterior surroundings (perceived) stimulate the consumer's cognitive, affective, and bodily responses and then influence the consumer's behavior responses of convergence or avoidance (**Aljumah *et al.***, 2021). Eroglu et al. primarily applied the

S-O-R model to an online shopping context and figured out that the website ambiance (S) influences the consumer's internal states (O, cognitive and affective) and thus on consumers' shopping outcomes (R, tend/far) is also influenced by personality traits (involvement level and atmosphere response) (**Li *et al.***, 2023) as shown in Figure 1.

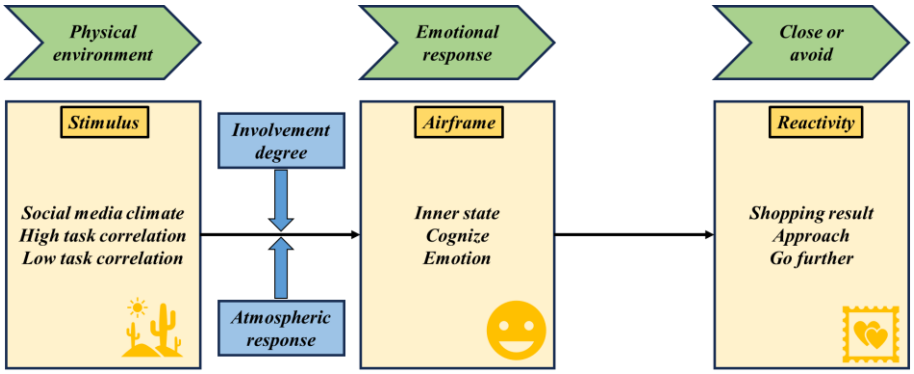


Figure 1: SOR Model.

S-O-R theory is now extensively used in purchaser conduct to discover the inner mechanism of the impact of the exterior surroundings (enclosure, characteristics, etc.) on the behavioral outcome (consumer behavior), i.e., the external environmental stimuli through the influence of the consumer's cognition, attitudes, emotions, experiences, and other consumers' internal state and then produce consumer behavioral outcomes such as purchasing behaviors (willingness) and impulsive purchasing behaviors (willingness), and the same is The theoretical basis of this paper (**Unnava; Aravindakshan**, 2021).

2.2. Variable Definition

Authenticity: user-generated content on the product information is consistent with the actual description, accurate, and reliable, the content publisher in describing their own experience of using the product can be objective and real, so that consumers, even if they first contact with the product can also have a clear understanding of the product.

Interesting: Because the content publisher uses a humorous tone, story plot, and other ways of expression so that the content is attractive to consumers, consumers can generate a feeling of pleasure during browsing, which is an important factor in attracting consumers to pay attention to and accept the information (**Kay *et al.***, 2020).

Practicality: the information provided in the user-generated content brings practical help to consumers' lives, such as providing timely information on promotional activities to help consumers buy goods at lower prices, providing comparative information on different brands of the same category of products to reduce the cost of consumer information collection, allowing consumers to find out that there is a certain product that can solve the problem that has been troubling them for a long time, and so on.

Perceived value: After reading user-generated content on social media, consumers form a subjective acceptance of the overall price of the products mentioned in the content (**Nekmahmud *et al.***, 2022). On the one hand, consumers visualize the benefits of owning the product, i.e., the perceived benefits. On the other hand, they weigh the financial and psychological charges of buying the product, i.e., the perceived loss, and the trade-off between the two types the perceived cost of the product.

2.3. Research Hypothesis

Authenticity is an important characteristic of user-generated content, i.e., the information covered by the content is objective and trustworthy. It has been pointed out that whether something is authentic and trustworthy is a perceptual characteristic (**Appel *et al.***, 2020). It can be seen that objective authenticity and constructed authenticity are two concepts, and constructed authenticity is an indispensable mediator for consumers to have a high-quality experience (**Qin**, 2020). Content with objective authenticity allows users to see the sincerity of the publisher and make it clear that the content is not sponsored by the brand, allowing users to form positive perceptions of the product (**Saima; Khan**, 2020). Consumers in contact with user-generated content will in mind the credibility of the information to assess the information on the premise that the information is real and credible will produce the dissemination effect, and the authenticity of user-generated content will affect the user's shopping choices (**Saima; Khan**, 2020). It can be seen that authentic information is more likely to generate trust among consumers and enhance the value perception of products mentioned in the content.

Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypothesis：

H1a: Authenticity of user-generated content plays a positive role in consumers' perceived value
H1b: Authenticity of user-generated content plays a positive role in consumers' expected regret

Fun is a very important reason why consumers choose to apply social media. Due to the high stress of life, life is boring and for other reasons, more and more people try to release pressure and find fun through social media, absurd stories, sitcom-style narratives, creative ideas, one person playing multiple roles, immersive introductions and other user-generated content so that the user to maintain a relaxed, happy mood when browsing more easily receive the information transmitted (**Jacobson *et al.***, 2020). The existing research on fun mainly focuses on the advertising field about the fun of user-generated content on the expected regret mechanism is not clear, because the fun of the content can increase the consumer's enjoyment of the product. The consumer may not be able to get their favorite product to form the expected regret.

Thus, this paper proposes the following hypothesis.

H2a: The interestingness of user-generated content plays a positive role in consumers' perceived value
H2b: The interestingness of user-generated content plays a positive role in consumers' expected regret.

Utility means the extent to which the acquired news is helpful for individual judgment and decision-making. In general, informative and valuable content can increase users' understanding of the product, mobilize them to process the information and form feedback, and then positively promote their emotions (**Yassin**, 2021). It can be seen that when consumers intentionally or unintentionally browse product-related content, the content, if it can introduce the functional use of the product, the way of use, the use of the experience, the purchase channel and discounts, etc., can leave a complete and deep impression on the user, to meet the user's curiosity and the product cognitive needs, which in turn generates a high perceived value. In short, regardless of the size of the objective time pressure, the discount strength is always an important factor that affects the consumer's downward expected regret, and thus user-generated content that can provide timely information about large discounts can enhance the consumer's expected regret of not purchasing (**Lou**, 2022). In addition to price discounts, scarcity also affects expected regret. On the one hand, product scarcity claims will prompt consumers to establish psychological ownership, and enhance the desire to possess the goods, which in turn reduces the expected regret of purchasing the product; on the other hand, product scarcity claims due to the restriction of the freedom of purchase will cause consumers to produce a sense of psychological resistance, and at the same time want to reiterate the freedom of purchasing, at this time, listening to the advice of others will be smaller than the opposition to the expected regret, i.e., the expected regret of purchasing behavior is smaller. To summarize, if user-generated content can provide timely information on price discounts, limited edition products, and other content with substantive help, i.e., with practicality, it may enhance consumers' expected regret.

Therefore, this paper proposes the hypothesis below.

H3a: The utility of user-generated content plays a positive role in consumers' perceived value
H3b: The utility of user-generated content plays a positive role in consumers' expected regret.

Based on existing research, it is known that when consumers browse user-generated content, they will weigh the cost of purchasing the product and the benefits of owning the product based on the information, and when it is clear that the benefits outweigh the costs, i.e., when the perceived value is higher, a strong willingness to purchase will be formed, and even if there is no previous purchase plan, the purchase behavior may be implemented (**Sharma *et al.***, 2022). Anticipatory regret is the concern of individuals who imagine that the current decision may have an unfavorable effect on the future, and this concern will have an impact on individual decision-making. Since consumers tend to pursue regret minimization when making decisions, thus the higher the probability of not purchasing an expected regret, the more likely the consumer is to develop a willingness to purchase, and then unplanned purchasing behavior occurs.

Therefore, this paper puts forward the following hypothesis.

H4: Perceived value plays a positive role in consumers' unplanned purchase behavior
H5: Expected regret plays a positive role in consumers' unplanned purchase behavior

3. Questionnaire Design and Distribution

3.1. Questionnaire Design

To ensure the effectiveness of the study, in the preliminary stage of the questionnaire design, this paper reads the applicable research of preceding students and their questionnaire contents. Meanwhile, connecting with the topic of this paper, the author improves the mature research scales of the previous researchers. To avoid the semantic differences of foreign scales, this paper carries out English-Chinese back-translation of each question item and finally forms the first draft of the questionnaire.

There are three parts to the questionnaire, namely, the explanatory letter, the content material of the survey, and the conclusion. The explanatory letter section usually suggests the identification of the investigator, the cause of this survey, as nicely as assurance, modesty, and thanks, etc. The conclusion phase is used to categorical gratitude to the respondents

again, and the precise contents of the explanatory letter and the conclusion section are proven in the appendix.

The content of the survey is the main body of this questionnaire. To facilitate the enterprise and evaluation of the remaining consequences of the research, the phase of the questions is set as closed questions, primarily composed of two parts: The first section is the primary records of the respondents, which include gender, age, education, common month-to-month profits and so on. The 2d phase is the core phase of this paper, which investigates the variables associated with the elements influencing customers' impulsive shopping conduct in the context of social media influencer marketing, and units of the associated dimension query items.

This questionnaire used to be measured with the use of a Lient 5-point scale. For every variable, a set of statements about attitudes used to be set up, after which the respondents were given a preference to point out the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with every statement. Where “1” = “Strongly Disagree”, “2” = “Disagree”, “3” = ‘Neutral’, ‘4’ = ‘Agree’, ”5 “= “Strongly agree”.

All the questions in this questionnaire are mandatory. The respondents fill in the questionnaire with their very own authentic scenarios. In addition, the questionnaire is anonymized to keep away from involving the privateness of the respondents as a lot as possible, to make sure the authenticity of the questionnaire data. The content material of the questionnaire is proven in Table 1.

Table 1: Content of the Questionnaire.

Questions	Choices
Q1 Gender	Male\Female
Q2 Age	<20\21-25\26-30\31-40\>40
Q3 Education	<High school /Bachelor's degree or college/>Master's degree
Q4 Average monthly income	<RMB2,000 / RMB2,000-5,000 / RMB5,000-10,000 / >RMB10,000
Q5 Time spent using social media	< 1 year / 1-3 years / 4-6 years / >6 years
Q6 Average time spent using social media per day	Open question
Q7 Whether influencers have been followed on social media	Yes\No
Q8 Have you ever purchased a product because of the recommendation of an influencer?	Yes\No
Q9 Recall a time when you bought a product due to the fact of advice of an influencer and reply with the identity of the product bought.	Fill in the blanks
In addition to the basic demographic characteristics of the respondents, this part also investigates the respondents' use of social media, attention to influencers, marketing by influencers, and impulse purchases due to influencer marketing. Q8 is a screening question, when the respondent chooses “yes”, that is, the subject of this paper, continues to fill out the follow-up questionnaire; when the respondent chooses “no”, the survey will be terminated.	

3.2. Questionnaire Distribution

This paper takes the masses of different ages, education levels, and income levels as survey samples of this study to ensure the representativeness, diversity, and universality of the research samples. As the former status quo study of social media fresh food purchases, the consumer group is more than 20-40 crowd people, the majority of young people, so the survey respondents have a certain income of students and staff of colleges and universities are mainly. Most of the respondents have experience in social media use and purchase and have a strong ability to accept. This questionnaire is mainly distributed online, mainly through the “questionnaire star” platform randomly distributed to fill out, or in the form of a link through the social platform to the survey respondents.

(1) Pre-survey

To test the rationality of the formal questionnaire, the questionnaire was designed and improved based on communication with the expert and reference to the mature scale and was distributed in the circle of friends. 50 questionnaires in total were distributed in this pre-survey. 44 questionnaires were effectively recovered, with an effective recovery rate of 88%.

(2) Formal Research

The formal questionnaire was distributed from November 2023 to January 2024, mainly through the online distribution of “Questionnaire Star” software. 400 questionnaires in total were distributed, and 322 effectively recovered, with an effective recovery rate of 80.5%, which meets the requirements of the questionnaire and indicates that the data of the questionnaire can be analyzed in the next step. The basic information of the sample is listed in Table 2 below.

(1) In the sample of this paper, in terms of gender, there are more females than males. In terms of age, they are mainly 20-39 years old. For education level, it is mainly college and bachelor degree or above. In terms of income, the income is mainly between 3,000-5,000 yuan. Combined with the above analysis the current situation is relatively consistent with the actual situation.
(2) As for the time using social media, most respondents use it for 1-3 hours and 3-5 hours per day. This phenomenon

coincides with the 2.3 hours per capita use of social media surveyed in the analysis of China's social retail white paper statistics and also conforms to the recent situation of strong social media user stickiness, ensuring the validity of the sample data.

Table 2: Basic Information of the Sample.

Sample Basic Information	Type	Number of Samples	Percentage
Gender	Male	141	44
	Female	181	56
Age	<20	25	9
	20-29	141	44
	30-39	100	31
	40-49	56	16
Level of education	<High school	16	5
	College	45	14
	Bachelor's degree	125	35
	>Master's degree	40	16
Professional	Student	135	42
	Employee	187	58
Average monthly income	RMB1,000-3,000	90	28
	RMB3,000-5,000	96	30
	RMB5,000-10,000	103	32
	>RMB10,000	33	10
Time spent on social media	<1h	22	7
	1-3h	183	57
	3-5h	64	20
	5-7h	32	10
	>7h	21	6

4. Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

4.1. Reliability Analysis

In this paper, SPSS.23 is used to analyze the reliability of the amassed statistics to take a look at the consistency and steadiness of the dimension gadgets chosen for every variable. The last outcomes are proven in Figure 2.

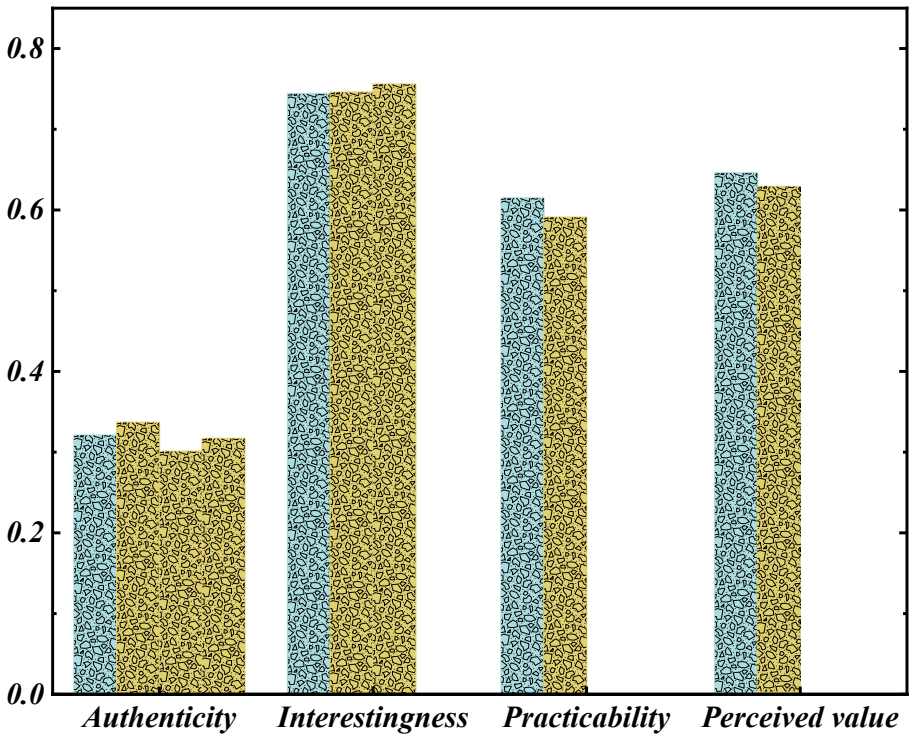


Figure 2: Confidence Analysis of Social Media Advertising Feature Volume.

Figure 2 suggests the outcomes of the reliability evaluation of the Social Media Advertising Content Characteristics Scale. It indicates that the survey results based solely on these dimension objects are reliable and acceptable when Cronbach's alpha coefficient falls between 0.35 and 0.7. A Cronbach's Alpha value greater than 0.7 indicates that the results derived entirely from these dimension devices are reliable. The results of the survey based entirely on the content material characteristics of social media classified ads appear to be highly reliable, as evidenced by the above table, which shows

that the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for authenticity alone is low at 0.441 while the coefficients for all other dimensions are greater than 0.7. At the same time, the measurements inside every dimension no longer enhance the coefficients of the questionnaire as a result of deleting a query item, so it used to be determined now not to delete any query item.

Table 3: Results of KMO and Bartlett's Sphericity Test for Social Media Advertising Content.

KMO Quantity of Sample Suitability		0.841
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approximate chi-square (math.)	10218.166
	df	325
	sig	0.000

Table 3 shows that the scale data of social media advertisement content features are appropriate for factor analysis since the KMO metric value is 0.841, which is more than 0.8. With 325 degrees of freedom, Bartlett's test of sphericity has an approximate chi-square value of 10218.166. At a significant level of 1%, the SIG value of 0.000, which is less than 0.01; passes the test of significance. These all show that the scale is very reliable and appropriate for factor analysis techniques.

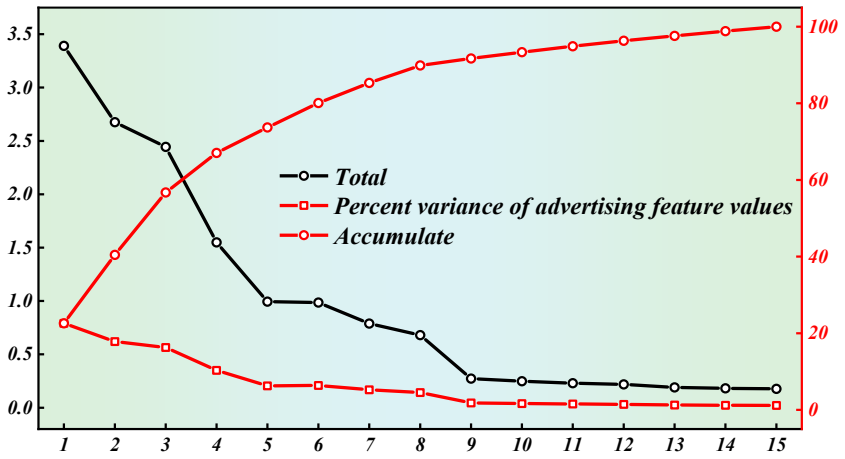


Figure 3: Total ANOVA for the amount of Advertisement Content Features.

As can be seen from Figure 3, the principal component extraction statistics table for the 15 topics of the social media advertising content feature scale shows that there are four factors with initial eigenvalues greater than 1, and the cumulative variance of the explained variance is 67.065%, which indicates that these topics can extract four factors and the degree of explanation is more desirable.

4.2. Correlation Analysis

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Coefficients.

	Product Familiarization	Price Importance	Activity Intention	Perceptual Invasiveness	Purchase Behavior	Product Type	Social Connection	Connection Structure
Product familiarization	1							
Price importance	0.34 6**	1						
Activity intention	0.02 3	0.02 4	1					
Perceptual invasiveness	-0.19 8**	-0.34 1**	-0.19 1**	1				
Purchase behavior	0.34 7**	0.45 8**	0.32 3**	-0.68 8**	1			
Product type	0.02 6	0.10 9*	-0.04 3	-0.15 0**	-0.0 54	1		
Social connection	0.26 0**	0.37 6**	0.23 6**	-0.45 9**	0.63 9**	-0.07 6	1	
Connection structure	0.27 7**	0.38 9**	0.20 9**	-0.47 1**	0.64 4**	-0.13 2**	0.69 2**	1

From the results of the correlation analysis between the variables in Table 4, influencers' activity intention is positively correlated with consumers' purchasing behavior and negatively correlated with consumers' perceived intrusiveness, with correlation coefficients of 0.323 and -0.191, respectively. Consumers' perceived intrusiveness is negatively correlated with their purchasing behavior, with a correlation coefficient of -0.688All of the above correlations is full-size at the 0.01 level, which preliminarily helps the speculation of direct impact in this study. Product type has a negative correlation with consumer perceived intrusiveness with a correlation coefficient of -0.150. Social ties and structural ties have a positive correlation with influencer activity intention, and consumer purchase behavior, and a negative correlation with consumer perceived intrusiveness, with correlation coefficients of 0.236, 0.639, -0.459, 0.209, 0.644, and -0.471, respectively. Social ties and structural ties are positively correlated with a correlation coefficient of 0.692.

4.3. Analysis of Moderating Effects

The moderated effects of product knowledge were tested with moderated mediated effects analysis using the Process plug-in for SPSS. Review Validity (RV) was once used as the unbiased variable X, Consumer Adoption Intention for

Innovative Products (CIAI) as the structured variable Y, Perceived Risk as the mediator variable M, and Product Knowledge (K) as the moderating variable W, whilst controlling for the outcomes of demographic traits and customer innovativeness. The mediator mannequin 7 with moderation is set with a self-assurance interval of 95%, an implied extraction dimension of 5000, a decentralized variable is set, and or minus one trendy deviation is chosen to have a look at the results. The outcomes of the regression evaluation are proven in Figure four as can be viewed from the figure, when regressing perceived hazard as the established variable, assessment valence has a considerable impact on perceived chance (β=-1.590, p<0.01), however, the interplay period between assessment valence and product know-how is now not significant. When overview valence and perceived chance have been regressed together on CIAI, evaluate valence (β=0.797, P<0.01) and perceived threat (β=-0.174, P<0.01) had vast effects. It can be seen that there is a mediating effect of perceived hazard in the relationship between considered effectiveness and consumers' willingness to undertake present-day products, on the other hand, the moderating effect of product statistics in the relationship between evaluation effectiveness and perceived hazard is now no longer significant. The moderating influence was once as soon as then in a similar way set up the utilization of the Bootstrap test.

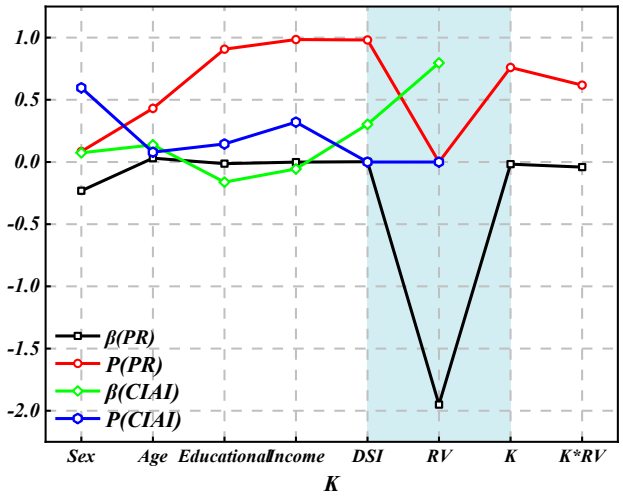


Figure 4: Regression Analysis.

Figure 5 displays the Bootstrap test results. The mediated mediator bias correction interval with moderation was (-0.022.0.049), which contained a zero value, and the moderating effect was not significant. However, none of the perceived risk bias correction intervals contained zero at different levels of product knowledge, indicating that perceived risk played an important mediating role in the relationship between review publisher expertise and CIAI.

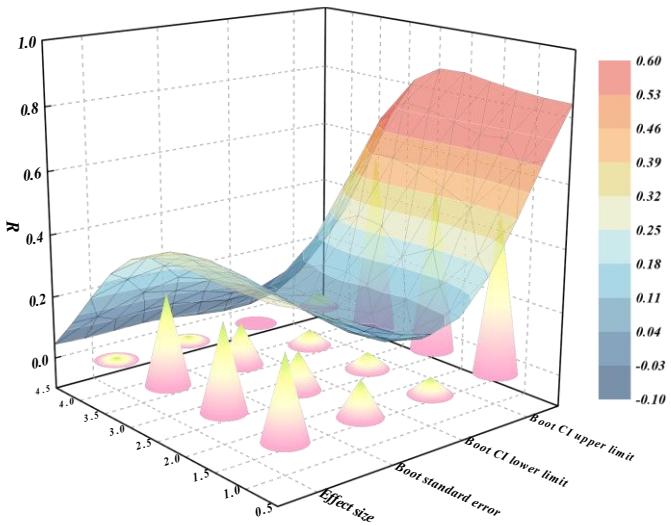


Figure 5: Moderating Effects Test.

In summary, the hypotheses are all verified.

5. Conclusion

This paper reveals the multiple influences of social media advertising on consumer behavior through empirical research, emphasizing the important role of authenticity, fun, and usefulness of user-generated content in enhancing consumers' perceived value and purchase intention. The results of the data analysis show that the authenticity of user-generated

content significantly enhances consumers' trust in the product, thus increasing their perceived value and purchase intention. Meanwhile, fun and usefulness, as key factors to attract consumers' attention, also promote consumers' unplanned purchase behavior to a certain extent. The specific conclusions are as follows:

1. The survey results obtained from the questions of social media commercial content material traits are at a higher stage of reliability, as evidenced by the fact that the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of truthfulness is less than 0.441 and the Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the various elements are greater than 0.7.

2. With a correlation value of -0.688, consumers' purchasing behavior and their perception of intrusiveness are adversely connected. The direct impact hypothesis in this study is supported in part by the fact that all of the aforementioned correlations are significant at the 0.01 level. With a correlation value of -0.150, product type and consumers' perceptions of intrusiveness are negatively correlated. With correlation values of 0.236, 0.639, and -0.459, 0.209, 0.644, and -0.471, respectively, social bonding and structural bonding had a negative link with consumer perceived intrusiveness and a positive correlation with influencer activity intention and consumer buying behavior.

3. Review valence significantly influenced perceived risk when regressed as the dependent variable (β=-1.590, P<0.01), but there was no significant interaction between review valence and product knowledge. When review potency and perceived risk were regressed jointly on CIAI, review potency (β=0.797, P<0.01) and perceived risk (β=-0.174, P<0.01) had an obvious impact.

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